

Impetigo

What is impetigo?

Impetigo is a highly contagious bacterial skin infection that causes draining sores on the body. It is caused by one of two types of bacteria, either group A *streptococci* or *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Who gets impetigo?

Anyone coming into contact with the draining sores is at risk of contracting the infection. Infants, the elderly, and individuals with chronic illnesses are more susceptible to infections than others. In adults, impetigo may follow other skin problems or after an upper respiratory tract infection. Impetigo occurs more often in the hot, humid summer and early fall months.

How is impetigo spread?

Impetigo is spread from person to person through direct contact with the discharge from the rash. This infection can rapidly spread among persons in close contact, such as children in a childcare facility or school. The infection can also be spread by clothes or towels that have been contaminated by open sores.

What are the symptoms of impetigo?

Impetigo begins as a cluster of small blisters that expand and rupture within the first 24 hours. The thin yellow fluid that drains from the ruptured blisters quickly dries forming a honey-colored crust. Impetigo develops most frequently on the legs, but may also be found on the arms, face, and trunk.

How soon do symptoms of impetigo appear?

Blisters appear four to 10 days after exposure to the fluids from blisters on another person.

What is the treatment for impetigo?

Impetigo may be treated with antibiotic ointment, oral antibiotics, or both. A person is no longer contagious 1 to 2 days after antibiotic treatment begins. When applying antibiotic ointment, take care to wear gloves and wash hands afterwards to avoid infection.

Are there complications from impetigo?

In very rare cases, the bacteria may invade beyond the skin and cause more serious illness, such as scarlet fever.

How can impetigo be prevented?

The best prevention is to avoid contact with known cases of impetigo. A person with impetigo should avoid contact with newborn babies and should be excluded from school, daycare, or food handling until receiving permission from a health care provider or until

at least 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment. Wash hands frequently. Daily wash toys, floors, and other surfaces where children play, with a bleach solution made of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water.

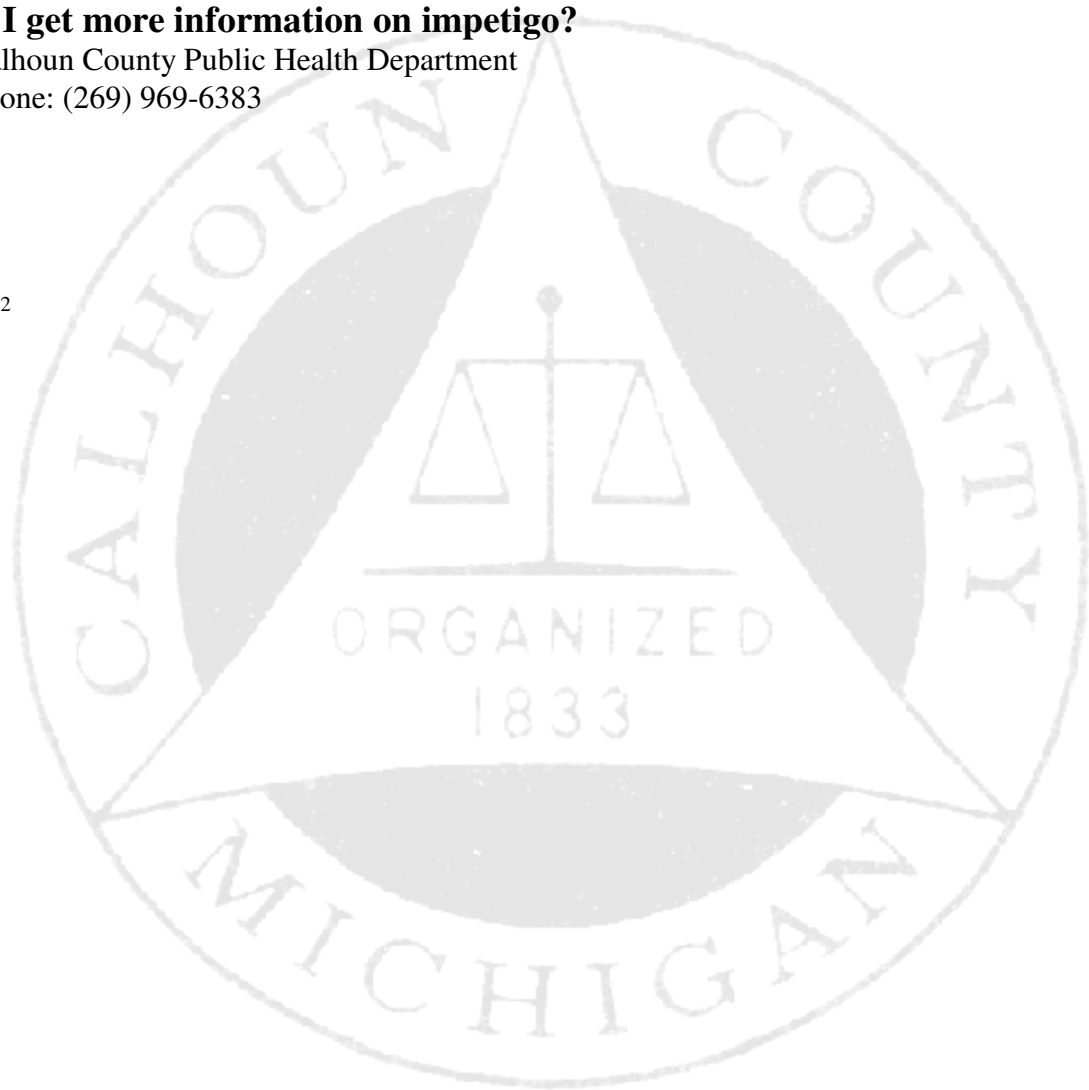
Encourage the infected person to wash hands frequently and avoid touching or picking at the rash or scabs. Wash the infected person's clothes, bedding, and towels at least once a day and never share them with other people.

How do I get more information on impetigo?

Calhoun County Public Health Department

Phone: (269) 969-6383

Impetigo
Updated 5/22/12



This fact sheet is meant to provide general health information and is not intended to be medical advice or otherwise take the place of your doctor's orders or to diagnose your specific health problems. Check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your health.

Calhoun County Public Health Department

190 E. Michigan Avenue, Suite A100

Battle Creek, Michigan 49014

Tel: (269) 969-6383

Fax: (269) 969-6488